

Daniel 4:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

Analysis

Daniel delivers the interpretation's climax with directness and clarity: 'It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.' The identification is unambiguous—Nebuchadnezzar is the tree. Daniel acknowledges the king's genuine greatness ('grown and become strong') without flattery or exaggeration. This greatness is real; the problem lies in its interpretation and the attitude it produced. The statement 'thy greatness is grown' parallels the tree's growth, while 'reacheth unto heaven' echoes the tree's height—both implying overreach, aspiring to divine status. The phrase 'thy dominion to the end of the earth' confirms worldwide empire, fulfilling the earlier vision (chapter 2) where Nebuchadnezzar was the 'head of gold.' This interpretation prepares for the next verse's judgment announcement, making clear that humbling comes precisely because of the pride accompanying legitimate achievement.

Historical Context

Nebuchadnezzar's historical greatness is undeniable. His military campaigns created the last great Mesopotamian empire; his building projects made Babylon ancient world's wonder; his administrative reforms organized vast territories; his reign represented Neo-Babylonian peak. Archaeological discoveries—the Ishtar Gate, palace ruins, brick inscriptions—confirm his boasts' historical basis. Yet these achievements fed hubris. Royal inscriptions claim he made Babylon's 'name

famous to the ends of the earth' and completed works 'no previous king accomplished.' This taking personal credit without acknowledging divine grant precipitated judgment. The historical parallel to modern Western civilization is striking: unprecedented technological, economic, and cultural achievements coexisting with spiritual pride rejecting God's sovereignty.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can we acknowledge genuine human achievement without feeding the pride that claims independent credit?
2. Why does God judge the prideful attitude toward success rather than the success itself?
3. In what ways does our culture's celebration of 'self-made' success mirror Nebuchadnezzar's pride?

Interlinear Text

אֲנִתָּה	הָ וְאֵל	מֶלֶךְ אֵל	דָּ י	רָבָת	וַיִּתֵּן כֹּחַ	וְרִבּוּתָּהּ
It is thou	H1932	O king	H1768	is grown	and become strong	for thy greatness
H607		H4430		H7236	H8631	H7238
רָבָת	וַיִּמָּוֶת	לְשָׁמַיִם	וְשָׁלָטָהּ	לְסוֹף	אֶרְצָא:	
is grown	and reacheth	unto heaven	and thy dominion	to the end	of the earth	
H7236	H4291	H8065	H7985	H5491	H772	

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 12:7 (Kingdom): And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

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